

It has been recommended that your child attends the Clinical Investigation Unit at Bristol Royal Hospital for Children for a food challenge.

This information sheet is designed to explain why this is necessary and what will happen during the admission. A few days before your admission please try and prepare your child for what to expect in hospital.

- ***Why do I need to attend the hospital for a challenge?***

If your child does have an allergic reaction to the food, we can quickly give your child some medicine and a doctor can see you straight away. We also want to be able to observe the type of symptoms that your child has.

- ***How long will it take?***

Your child is normally able to go home on or before 4pm in the afternoon. If he or she has had an allergic reaction they may need to be observed for a little longer.

- ***What should I bring?***

If your child is on a special diet, a suitable packed lunch and snacks that your child has safely eaten before should be brought in. The food to be

challenged will be supplied by the hospital. Please bring a list of the medication that your child takes and also his/her 'Red Book' or 'Child Health Record'.

- ***What will happen when I arrive?***

Before the challenge can begin, your child will need to be weighed and have their blood pressure and pulse taken. Asthmatic children may need to do their peak flow (blowing into a tube) and children with eczema will need to show where their eczema patches are.

'Magic Cream' which numbs the skin will be put on your child's hand. This is so that one of the doctors can insert a cannula (small needle) into a vein, causing as little distress as possible. The cannula is necessary in case your child has an allergic reaction and requires emergency drug treatment. This situation is very rare but one of the reasons why this test is carried out in hospital.

- ***How is the food given?***

The challenge begins by giving a very small amount of the food onto a patch of skin. If there is no reaction gradually increasing amounts of the food are given into the mouth every 15-20 minutes until a standard portion is eaten. The challenge is stopped at the first sign of symptoms.

What happens after the challenge?

You will need to stay for a minimum of 2 hours following the end of the challenge. If a reaction has occurred a doctor will need to decide when your child is well enough to go home. You will be given the 'result' of the food challenge and written advice. If there has been a reaction a further clinic appointment will be made.

Other Information:

Please ensure that your child is well on the day of the challenge. The challenge will not be able to go ahead if your child has sickness, diarrhoea, wheeze or a cold.

Your child should stop taking antihistamines (eg "Piriton" (Chlorphenamine), "Zirtek" (Cetirizine), "Claritin" (Loratidine) or "NeoClaritin" (Desloratidine) a minimum of 4 days before coming in for the food challenge. Please also avoid any cough mixtures which may contain antihistamines or drugs which may help children with eczema settle better at night (Phenergan or Vallergan etc).

**Sometimes a food challenge may be inconclusive because young children sometimes flatly refuse to eat the necessary quantity of the food in question. This is particularly common with nuts and therefore we try to avoid nut challenges in children under five. If a child only eats a small amount of the food without reaction this does not mean they are not allergic – we have to reach an amount equivalent to an average portion.

Clinical Investigations Unit

Food Challenges



Information for parents

<p>Name of child:</p> <p>Food to be challenged:</p>
